Training programs, mainly focused around minimalist approaches to building athletically functional strength and muscle mass

Omar Cabaleiro

Fitness Writings 2025

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Back Squats and Kettlebell Snatches

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025Sep4

This program involves doing only 2 exercises:

1. Back Squat (ideally ass-to-grass, but if you have orthopedic issues with that just go to parallel ("top of thighs" (quads) parallel to floor), or if you also have issues with that, try just quarter squats (an idea I got from one of Elliott Hulse's relatively recent YouTube videos))
2. Single-Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch (rep counts given are for each side)

Option A

Train every other day (or Monday, Wednesday, and Friday), and do only 1 of the following each workout (alternate):

- Back Squat
- Single-Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch

You'll be doing each each exercise using Mark Wildman's volume cycles. Here's the basics of it:

1. Do 1-to-5 reps per round
2. Start with 1-to-4 rounds per workout
3. Each workout, add 1-to-2 rounds, until you reach 20
4. Once you've completed 20 rounds in a single workout, increase resistance by ~5-to-10lbs (or increase the number of reps per round, if you've been doing fewer than 5), and return to step 1

(I'm certain that I've written at least 1 previous post utilizing this protocol, which I learned about on his YouTube channel. I recommend you go and learn about it directly from the source. The 2 YouTube videos of his where he explains it are titled, "Volume Cycles - the secret to building monster athletic programs," and "Kettlebell Snatch Nerd math video 1 - volume cycle." That's what their titles currently are, though I'm certain that the former was named something slightly different the first time I encountered it)

With the Back Squat, for which you'll most likely have access to small enough resistance increases, I suggest you use the double progression version of volume cycles. If this happens to not be the case, use the triple progression method I'll give for the Snatches.

1. Do 5 reps per round, beginning with 4 rounds the first workout
2. Add 2 rounds each successive workout, until you reach 20 rounds
3. Once you've done 20 rounds in a single workout, add 5-to-10lbs and return to step 1

With the Kettlebell Snatch, for which you might not have access to resistance increases smaller than 10-to-18lbs, use the triple progression version of volume cycles. If this happens to not be the case, use the double progression method I gave for the Squat.

1. Do 1-to-5 reps per round, beginning with 1-to-4 rounds the first workout
2. Add 1 or 2 rounds per workout, until you reach 20 rounds
3. Once you've done 20 rounds in a single workout, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the reps per round (to no more than 5), and return to step 1
   (Only increase the resistance once you've completed 20 rounds in a single workout at 5 reps per round.)

Option B

Train once every 3 days, or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e.: Monday and Friday), and do only 1 of the following each training day (alternate):

- Back Squat, using Paul Carter's 3/50 Method
- Single-Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch, using a take on cluster sets that I adapted from one of Josh Bryant and Adam benShea's books, The Saga of the Tijuana Barbell Club

If you want, you can start off training every other day, until you start to feel like you're hitting a wall, then reduce frequency. This could be particularly useful if you're being conservative with the resistance you kick things off with, to help ensure that you get all the volume in.

3/50 Method:

1. Start with your ~20 rep max
2. Do 50 total reps within 3 sets
3. Rest only 1 minute between sets
4. If you can complete all 50 reps within 3 sets, resting only 1 minute between sets, increase resistance by 5-to-10lbs next time around

Cluster Sets:

1. Starting resistance: your 15-to-20 rep max (per side)
2. Do 5 reps for 1 side, immediately followed by 5 reps for the other
3. Rest 15 seconds
4. Do this for 5 minutes straight
5. If, within 5 minutes, you can do at least 30 reps per side, increase resistance next time around

Option C

This version will last for 9 weeks (18 total Squat workouts).
Train 2 days on, 1 day off, 2 on, 2 off (train Monday & Tuesday, also Thursday & Friday), doing only 1 of the following each workout (Snatch on the first of 2 consecutive training days, and Squat on the second):

- Single-Kettlebell Hang Power Snatch, using Mark Wildman's volume cycles (see Option A)
- Back Squat, using a 20-rep Squat protocol I got from the Cult of Strength website

20-rep Squat protocol:
(Basically, the idea is that you'll be pushing to turn your current 5RM into your new 20RM.)

1. Starting weight: your 5 rep max, minus 90lbs (or, if you want to really ease into things, and give yourself a better shot to get some decent momentum going, start off with a weight you can do for 20 reps "any day of the week")
2. Do a single 20-rep set, adding 5lbs each workout (if you completed the 20 the previous workout)

(Maybe move on to something different after finishing this, especially if you started off using your actual 5RM minus 90lbs. Or, if you started off with something "easy," then start over with your actual 5RM minus 90lbs.)

Random Couplets from Pre-Selected Pool of Exercises

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025Sep9

This is an approach I used in the early 2020s to get back into the habit of training often. I got the idea from the work of Greg Glassman/ Crossfit.

Choosing Exercises to Include

Build your chosen pool of exercises based on a combination of 2 factors:

1. Your training objective(s)
2. Your training logistics. Apart from the obvious- equipment, space, and time availability, this also includes stuff like needing to train around pain/ injury(ies)/ etc.

When I first used this protocol, in fall of 2022, here is what I included:

1. Basic single-kettlebell exercises; with these, I basically "covered all the bases," such as strength, explosiveness, stamina.
2. One-hand and two-hand versions of basic heavy club exercises; along with core rotation and shoulder mobility as bonuses, the main benefits I was after with these were grip strength and related hypertrophy (not just forearms, but also wrists and hands- even a bit for biceps).
3. Bilateral and unilateral bodyweight Squat variations; I really only added these to balance out the additional upperbody work I'd be doing from supplementing the kettlebell training with clubbells.

I was really only interested in resistance training at the time, but you can add "cardio" exercises, and/ or whatever else matches your own training objectives/ preferences.

Some Options for How to Randomly Draw Exercises

- Write each exercise name on a separate little piece of paper, put them all into some container and, without looking, draw however many pieces of paper matches the number of exercises you want to do that training session.
- From a deck of playing cards, separate however many cards matches the number of exercises you've chosen. On a piece of paper, or in a spreadsheet, create the legend detailing which exercise each playing card corresponds to. Without looking, draw the appropriate number of cards for your workout.
- If you're even a total novice at, or interested in learning, programming, you can create a very small app where you put all of the exercises you've chosen into an array, and create a button which will randomly draw 1 or more exercises when pressed.

If you go to the "randomized-training" repository on my GitHub page (@omarcabaleiro), and download it, you can replace the movement pattern names, in the array within the JavaScript file, with the specific names of your chosen exercises.

Deployment Ideas

Of course, you don't need to limit yourself to just couplets, you can do a single exercise per session, or more than 2. Basically, this sets you up for some DIY CrossFit.

You can even do this with training partners, taking into account, along with equipment and space availability, all your training objectives/ preferences combined. Get together for your workout session, and randomly draw the exercise(s) right there on the spot.

Personally, I trained pretty much every day when I used this, usually several times per day. I took a very intuitive approach to intensity. For some workouts I pushed myself, and for others not so much, based on how I felt. I was basically prioritizing getting inertia in my favor, with regard to training consistency.

Snatches and Farmer's Walks

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Nov.20

Each of these programs will consist of 2 exercises, essentially, as the title suggests, the Snatch and the Farmer's Walk (and/ or some variation of each).

Option A

You'll train every day.

- 7 days per week, you'll do the Snatch, using Steve Justa's "Singles Workout Strategy No. 1," from his book, Rock Iron Steel.
- Every other day, or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e., Monday and Friday), you'll finish your training session by doing the Farmer's Walk.

Steve Justa Singles Workout Strategy No. 1 protocol:

- At the start of each month you'll test your 1RM.
- The very next day you'll do 3 singles with 70% of you 1RM, resting 1-to-2 minutes between sets.
- Continuing to train every single day, add 2 singles per day, until you're doing 15 singles on the 7^{th} day.
- Start your next week of singles by increasing the weight by 5-to-10lbs, and reducing the number of sets back down to 3.

For the Farmer's Walk, give this approach a shot:

1. Choose your starting weight and carry it for 100 feet, just once. (To avoid always turning around to the same side, I recommend alternating, from one session to the next, and recording it in your training log.)
2. Each successive session, add 1 round (carry it 100 feet again), up to a maximum of 5 rounds. (I'll leave it up to you to figure out how much to rest between rounds, but you should record that too.)
3. Continue using the same weight, but now carry it for 200 feet, just once.
4. Again, add 1 round per workout, maxing out at 5 rounds.
5. Continue using the same weight, but now carry it for 300 feet, just once.
6. Again, add 1 round per workout, maxing out at 5 rounds.
7. Based on how that felt, add 5-to-10lbs total (or per side), and return to step 1.

Option B

Here, you'll train either every other day, or on 3 fixed days per week (i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
You'll do only 1 of the following per training day (alternate):

- Overhead Squat, using Mark Wildman's Volume Cycles
- Farmer's Walk, using the protocol given in Option A above

Mark Wildman's Volume Cycles protocol:
(Within each individual session, you'll use the same weight, and also the do the same number of reps, for all rounds.)

1. Pick a manageable starting weight, and do 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps each. (I recommend resting 1 minute between rounds.)
2. Each session, while keeping the weight and also reps-per-round the same, increase the number of rounds by 1 or 2, up to a maximum of 20 rounds.
3. Once you've reach 20 rounds, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the reps per round by ~1-to-2 and, keeping the weight the same, return to step 1. If you've already been doing 5 reps per round, increase the weight by 5-to-10lbs, and return to step 1.

Option C

Here are the 2 parts of this program:

- 7 days per week, you'll train the Snatch using the same protocol given in Option A above.
- Every other day, or on 3 fixed days per week (i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday), or on 2 fixed days per week (i.e., Monday and Friday), you'll do the Kettlebell Mile.

I got the idea for the Kettlebell Mile from an article of the same name on the StrongFirst website, written by Mike Prevost. I strongly suggest you read it before doing this.
Essentially, it's a fixed-distance Suitcase Carry, where you can switch hands as many times as you need to.
In the article, 20-to-30% of bodyweight is mentioned as the resistance to use.

My recommendations for doing the Kettlebell Mile:

- I suggest that you start out with a weight that feels ridiculously light to you. (Also, as touched on in the original article, you may need to gradually work up to 1 mile.)
- Try to work toward switching hands only once- at the halfway point, and once you can do that, only then should you increase resistance. (With unilateral carries, to avoid always turning around toward the same side, I recommend alternating which side you carry the weight on to start, from 1 session to the next, and always turn around toward that side. Record this in your training journal.)

Option D

Here you'll train either every other day, or on 3 fixed days per week (i.e., Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
Do only 1 of the following each training day (alternate):

- the Overhead Squat, using the protocol given in Option B above
- the Kettlebell Mile, using the protocol given in Option C above

Smolov Jr. for Snatch-Grip High Pull, with a Side of Dips

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.4

I discovered the Snatch-Grip High Pull via Christian Thibaudeau's YouTube channel, and since then, it's become my go-to "paint with broad brush strokes" exercise for strength & power, athleticism, and muscle mass.

If I remember correctly, in the 1 or 2 videos I've seen with him demonstrating the (Hang) Snatch-Grip High Pull himself, he doesn't really lower the bar below the upper thigh area. There was 1 video though, where he explained but had someone else demonstrate, and there the bar was lowered to just below the knees.

The latter is the version I use, for 2 main reasons:

1. The more deliberate approach, involving slowing down for longer as I lower the weight further, helps me keep myself honest with my form.
2. The longer range of motion and increased stretch of the hamstrings helps me get that much more lower-body work from this exercise.

Smolov Jr.

As you can tell from the title of this post, the (Hang) Snatch-Grip High Pull is the exercise which we'll be using the Smolov Jr. protocol for. This portion of the regimen will be the priority: a full-body explosive movement, where we can hit the entire posterior chain, plus get some really good work in for the upper-body (trap-focused) pulling pattern, and also a bit of leg drive at the extended end of ROM.

Below is what the Smolov Jr. protocol looks like, over its 3-week duration
(sets x reps @ % of 1RM + additional resistance):

WEEK1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3
Day 1: 6x6 @ 70%	Day 1: 6x6 @ 70% +5-10lbs	Day 1: 6x6 @ 70% + 10-20lbs
Day 2: off	Day 2: off	Day 2: off
Day 3: 7x5 @ 75%	Day 3: 7x5 @ 75% + 5-10lbs	Day 3: 7x5 @ 75% + 10-20lbs
Day 4: off	Day 4: off	Day 4: off
Day 5: 8x4 @ 80%	Day 5: 8x4 @ 80% + 5-10lbs	Day 5: 8x4 @ 80% + 10-20lbs
Day 6: 10x3 @ 85%	Day 6: 10x3 @ 85% + 5-10lbs	Day 6: 10x3 @ 85% + 10-20lbs
Day 7: off	Day 7: off	Day 7: off

Test your 1RM, then up to ~1 week later, begin the Smolov Jr. protocol.
After finishing the 3 weeks, retest your 1RM up to ~1 week later.
I've seen it recommended (& I recommend) to rest at least 2 minutes between sets. Increase rest between sets as necessary as you progress.

Dips

The Dips are basically for the sake of not totally ignoring the upper-body (chest-focused) pushing movement pattern, and also getting some overall anterior chain work.
On indicated days, after pulling, do a single set of bodyweight-only Dips to failure or close enough.
It should feel doable, but like you definitely got some pushing work in.
If these seem to be interfering with your recovery from the HSGHP though, back off as necessary from the Dips.

Here's what each week will look like with both exercises:
Day 1: HSGHP + Dip
Day 2: off
Day 3: HSGHP + Dip
Day 4: off
Day 5: HSGHP only
Day 6: HSGHP + Dip
Day 7: off

High-Pull Singles, Triples, and Fives

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.9

The load + rep count combo used here is largely based on an article written by Craig Marker titled, “4 Secrets of Soviet Weightlifting (As Revealed by Pavel),” on the Breaking Muscle website.

(Also, Google AI made it very fast and easy to find an article by Pavel Tsatsouline himself, about the same approach- “The Origins of StrongFirst Programming: The Soviet System,” on the StrongFirst website.)

With that said, this program, and my latest search(es) for Soviet (strength) training information, were largely inspired by my recent revisiting of the Smolov Jr. protocol within my own training.

The Program

The Hang Snatch-Grip High Pull will be the star of this regimen.
Train this exercise on 3 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
You’ll do a specific warm-up (ramp-up sets, as necessary), then use static weight for 3 work sets (the same weight for all 3 work sets within each workout).
Rest at least 2 minutes between work sets.
Here is what your first 2 weeks will look like, as far the the HSGHP goes:

WEEK 1
Day 1: 3 singles for the HSGHP with your 3RM
Day 2:
Day 3: 3 triples for the HSGHP with your 9RM
Day 4:
Day 5: 3 fives for the HSGHP with your 15RM
Day 6:
Day 7:

WEEK 2
Day 1: 3 doubles for the HSGHP with your 3RM
Day 2:
Day 3: 3 sixes for the HSGHP with your 9RM
Day 4:
Day 5: 3 tens for the HSGHP with your 15RM
Day 6:
Day 7:

After week 2, you'll add 5lbs, and return to week-1 rep counts, and the week after that you'll use week-2 reps counts:

WEEK 3
Day 1: 3 singles for the HSGHP with your 3RM + 5lbs
Day 2:
Day 3: 3 triples for the HSGHP with your 9RM + 5lbs
Day 4:
Day 5: 3 fives for the HSGHP with your 15RM + 5lbs
Day 6:
Day 7:

WEEK 4
Day 1: 3 doubles for the HSGHP with your 3RM + 5lbs
Day 2:
Day 3: 3 sixes for the HSGHP with your 9RM + 5lbs
Day 4:
Day 5: 3 tens for the HSGHP with your 15RM + 5lbs
Day 6:
Day 7:

Up to ~1 week after completing your last week-4 HSGHP workout, retest your 1RM. Then you can try to restart the program with your re-calibrated RMs straight away, or take a break and do something else for about 1 week or 1 month, or whatever- then return. See how you feel.

Now, to avoid totally neglecting other major movement patterns without sapping your recovery ability too much, you'll supplement this with Kettlebell Swings*, Wall Sits, and Push Ups.
(* In my programming, I always mean 2-Hand Kettlebell Swings, by default.)

Here's what each week will look like with all exercises included:
Day 1: HSGHP + KB Swing
Day 2: Wall Sit + Push Up
Day 3: HSGHP + KB Swing
Day 4: Wall Sit + Push Up
Day 5: HSGHP + KB Swing
Day 6: Wall Sit + Push Up
Day 7: off*
(* If you prefer to not take any days totally off, you can do either Wall Sit or Push Up on day 6, then the other on day 7.)

Protocols for Supplementary Exercises

KETTLEBELL SWINGS

You'll do this exercise on your HSGHP days, after completing all 3 of your work sets with that.
I came up with this based on my only having access to resistance increases in ~18lb increments. It's heavily inspired by Mark Wildman's volume cycles.
The 4-week HSGHP mesocycle above will be over before you get too far into this, but you can continue your progress with this after you stop with that and/ or when you restart it with re-calibrated rep maxes.
Pick your starting weight and:

1. Do a single set of 20 reps.
2. Each session, while using the same weight, add 1 set of 20 reps, up to a maximum of 5. Rest 30 seconds between sets.
3. After you've completed 5 sets in a single workout, keep weight the same, but do only 1 set of 25 reps.
4. Each session, while using the same weight, add 1 set of 25 reps, up to a maximum of 4. Rest 30 seconds between sets.
5. After you've completed 4 sets in a single workout, keep the weight the same, but do only 1 set of 33 reps.
6. Each session, while using the same weight, add 1 set of 33 reps, up to a maximum of 3. Rest 30 seconds between sets.
7. After you've completed 3 sets in a single workout, keep the weight the same, but do only 1 set of 50 reps.
8. The next session, go for 2 sets of 50. Rest 30 seconds between sets.
9. After that, increase resistance by ~10-to-20lbs and return to step 1.

WALL SITS

You'll do these on alternate days from the HSGHP.

1. Do a single set of 20 seconds.
2. Each session, add 1 20-second set, up to a maximum of 5. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
3. After you've completed 5 sets in a single session, do a single set of 25 seconds.
4. Each session, add 1 25-second set, up to a maximum of 4. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
5. After you've completed 4 sets in a single session, do a single set of 33 seconds.
6. Each session, add 1 33-second set, up to a maximum of 3. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
7. After you've completed 3 sets in a single session, do a single set of 50 seconds.
8. The next session, go for 2 sets of 50 seconds each. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.

You can try doing this while squeezing a medicine ball between your knees, if you'd like.
If you finish this, or you'd just rather do something different, you can do Air/ Goblet Squats using Mark Wildman's volume cycles. (Check his YouTube channel for explanation.)

PUSH UPS
You'll do these after Wall Sits.

1. Do a single set of 10 reps.
2. Each session, add 1 10-rep set, up to a maximum of 5. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
3. After completing 5 sets in a single session, do a single set of 15 reps.
4. Each session, add 1 15-rep set, up to a maximum of 3. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
5. After completing 3 sets in a single session, do a single set of 20 reps.
6. Next session, do 2 sets of 20 reps. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
7. Next session, do 1 25-rep set.
8. Next session, do 2 25-rep sets. Rest 30-to-60 seconds between sets.
9. Next session, go for 1 set of 33 reps.
10. Next session, go for 1 set of 50 reps.
11. At this point, you can add weight (weight vest or rubber-coated weight plate on your upper back) and return to step 1, and you can add a bit more weight (~5-to-10lbs) each time around. Alternatively, you can progress from ~50 total reps to ~100 total reps with each rep-per-set count above: first with 10s, then after you've reached 100 total reps, do it with 15s, etc.

Instead of this, you can try out just doing 2 sets to failure. Rest 1-to-2 minutes between sets. If that seems to interfere with your HSGHP recovery too much, then try it with only a single set to failure.

Totally Minimized Version(s)

If all that "extra stuff" clashes too much with your HSGHP progress, whittle the program down to this:
Day 1: HSGHP
Day 2: Push Up
Day 3: HSGHP
Day 4: Push Up
Day 5: HSGHP
Day 6: Push Up
Day 7: off

or this:
Day 1: HSGHP + Push Up
Day 2: off
Day 3: HSGHP + Push Up
Day 4: off
Day 5: HSGHP + Push Up
Day 6: off
Day 7: off

Sandbag Shoulder Carries and Plate Flips

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.23

This program consists of only the 2 exercises named in the title, the Sandbag Shoulder Carry and the Plate Flip.
The SSCs are for general strength and stamina, and the Plate Flips are to focus on grip strength.

You can either train 3 days per week and do both exercises each training day, or you can do 1 or the other exercise per session alternating between the 2 from 1 training day to the next. I'll leave it up to you which you want to do first between the 2.

One approach is to train every day, or 6 days per week, or Monday-to-Friday, and do 1 exercise per day, alternating between the 2.
You can also train on 3 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and do both exercises each day.
Then there's this (You can switch SSC to days 1 & 4, and Plate Flips to days 2 & 5, if you prefer.):
Day 1: Plate Flip
Day 2: Sandbag Shoulder Carry
Day 3: off
Day 4: Plate Flip
Day 5: Sandbag Shoulder Carry
Day 6: off
Day 7: off

Sandbag Shoulder Carry Progression Protocol

Give this a shot. Pick your starting weight and:

1. Go for 100 feet, switching sides only at the halfway mark*.
2. Each session, do 1 additional 100ft round, up to a maximum of 5.
3. The next session after you've done 5rds at 100ft, do a single round at 200 feet.
4. Each session, do 1 additional 200ft round, up to a maximum of 5.
5. The next session after you've done 5rds at 200ft, do a single round at 300 feet.
6. Each session, do 1 additional 300ft round, up to a maximum of 5.
7. The next session after you've done 5rds at 300ft, increase the resistance by ~10-25lbs and return to step 1.

If you feel you need to increase distance by smaller increments, such as by 50 feet, go for it.
(*From session to session, alternate which side you hold the weight on first, and always turn around to that side. I like to do this to help avoid always turning to the same side. Keep track of this detail in your training notes so you don't need to try to remember.)

Plate Flip Progression Protocol

For this exercise, use either bumper plates or rubber-coated plates.
Rep counts given are for each side. Do both sides each round^.
You will progress using Mark Wildman's volume cycles approach. Pick your starting weight (Please start off with something that seems super ridiculously light, and ease your way up from there.) and:

1. Do 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps per round to start. Try resting 30-to-60 seconds between rounds to start, but feel it out and see what works best for you. You may need to rest longer.
2. Each session, add 1 or 2 more rounds at the same resistance and reps-per-round, up to a total of 20.
3. Once you've completed 20 rounds in a single workout, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the rep-per-round count to no more than 5, and return to step 1- keeping resistance the same. If you have been doing 5 reps per round, increase the resistance by ~5lbs, or by as little as possible if higher than that is all you have available, and return to step 1.

(^ From session to session, I like to alternate which side I do first, and record that in my training notes. Alternatively, you can do as Mark Wildman has recommended in his work, and just do your weaker side first.)

KB High Pull to Overhead plus Toes-to-Bar

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.26

If I remember correctly, I first saw the 2-Hand Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead performed in YouTube videos I found while searching for Soviet wrestling conditioning training. It may've been about 2 years ago; not totally sure.

I didn't really have a name for it until I watched some videos by James Pieratt, on his Wild Hunt Conditioning channel; in particular, a short titled "Soviet Kettlebell Deficit High Pull ..." However, if you search online for demonstrations, you won't necessarily see it performed to overhead. That's why I decided to call it what I call it in this post.

The Program

If logistics allow for it in your current situation, train 2 days on 1 day off, with no regard for what day of the week it is:

1. Day 1: 2-Hand Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead
2. Day 2: Toes-to-Bar
3. Day 3: off

If you can't do that, due to a Monday-to-Friday workweek, etc- try this:

1. **Mon**: 2-Hand Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead
2. **Tue**: Toes-to-Bar
3. **Wed**: off
4. **Thu**: 2-Hand Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead
5. **Fri**: Toes-to-Bar
6. **Sat**: off
7. **Sun**: off

The progression protocol you'll use for both exercises will be Mark Wildman's volume cycles.
Pick your starting resistance, and:

1. Perform 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps each (same number of reps each round). Rest 30-to-60 seconds between rounds.
2. Each session, while keeping resistance and reps-per-round the same, do an additional 1-to-2 rounds (up to a maximum of 20).
3. Once you've performed 20 rounds in a single session, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the reps per round (to no more than 5) while keeping resistance the same, and return to step 1. If you have been doing 5 reps per round, increase resistance* and return to step 1.

(* For the 2-Hand Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead, increase resistance by 5-to-20lbs. For the Toes-to-Bar, increase the resistance by 1-to-5lbs, via either ankle weights or by holding a light, and preferably rubber-coated, dumbbell between your feet.)

Form, etc for the Kettlebell High Pull to Overhead

As I mentioned at the start of the post, you won't necessarily see this exercise performed as I intend it here if you search for demonstrations online.

FORM

- Have your feet shoulder-width apart, with toes slightly turned out (or straight ahead, if you believe that works better for you).
- You're holding a single kettlebell handle with both hands.
- Each rep, you'll touch the weight down on the ground, level with your feet.^
- At the top of the movement, fully extend your arms overhead.
- Do not turn your wrists over at the top the way you would with a snatch. Instead, keep the hands pronated over the kettlebell handle, with the base hanging downward.

(^ You can perform this exercise from a deficit, like in the black & white videos where I first saw this exercise, and as the name used by James Pieratt indicates. Also, you can perform it from the hang.)

AN ALTERNATIVE EXERCISE

If you prefer, you can do the Kettlebell Alternating Power Snatch instead. Each rep will begin and end with the kettlebell on the ground between your feet, and you'll alternate reps between left and right hands. The rep counts given above would be for each side.

Toes-to-Bar Regressions and Alternatives

REGRESSIONS

If the Toes-to-Bar is currently too difficult for you, do the Hanging Leg Raise instead.
If the Hanging Leg Raise is currently too difficult for you, do the Hanging Knee Raise instead.

ALTERNATIVES

If you don't have reasonable access to a (high enough) Pull Up bar, do the Ab Roller and/ or V-Ups instead.
If you don't have an Ab Roller, and/ or both exercises above are currently too difficult for you, do Sit-Ups and/ or Supine Straight Leg Raises~ instead.
(~ These are called "Flat Straight Leg Raises" in Paul Wade's book, Convict Conditioning.)

Dumbbell High Pull and Weighted Dip

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.29

I got the idea for the Dumbbell Alternating High Pull from an Instagram post by Zach Even-Esh, most likely in 2025. Each rep will begin and end with the weight on the ground, between your feet. Rep counts given below are for each side. Perform both sides each round/ set.

For the Weighted Dip, you can use a weight belt and/ or vest.

Option A

Train either every single day or every other day, and alternate these 2 exercises from 1 workout to the next:

- Dumbbell Alternating High Pull
- Weighted Dip

I recommend starting off with the higher frequency and, as recovery/ progress becomes more difficult, decrease the frequency.

For both exercises, you'll be using Mark Wildman's volume cycles. Pick your starting resistance and:

1. Perform 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps each (same resistance and reps for each round). Rest 1 minute between rounds.
2. Each session, do an additional 1-to-2 rounds, up to a maximum of 20.
3. Once you've done 20 rounds in a single session, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase reps per round (to no more than 5) while keeping resistance the same, and return to step 1. If you've already been doing 5 reps per round, increase resistance by ~5lbs and return to step 1.

Option B

Here you'll be training both exercises every single day (literally- 7 days per week) using a modified version of Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy No. 3:

- Using 70% of your 1RM for each lift, do 6 singles of each lift, resting 1-to-2 minutes between singles. Complete all singles for Dumbbell Alternating High Pulls before moving on to Weighted Dips (or you can reverse the order, if you feel you get better results that way).
- Add 5lbs to each lift every 3 days.
- Test your 1RM once every 3 weeks, and restart the 3-week cycle with 70% of that.

Option C

Train the Dumbbell Alternating High Pull every single day using Steve Justa's Singles Workout Strategy No. 1:

- Begin the month using 70% of your 1RM
- You'll train in 1-week microcycles, performing 3 singles on the first day and adding 2 more singles each day, topping out at 15 total singles on the 7th day of each week. Rest 1-to-2 minutes between singles.
- At the start of each week, increase resistance by 5lbs (and, as indicated above, reset the number of singles to 3).
- Test your 1RM once per month and restart the 1-month mesocycle with 70% of that.

For the Weighted Dip, you'll be using Mark Wildman's volume cycles, just like in Option A. Do it 2 or 3 days per week. Again, I suggest you start off with the higher frequency and adjust as necessary once you progress enough.

Presses and Zercher Carries

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.31

I suggest you begin by training daily, alternating the 2 exercises named in the title, from 1 day to the next.
As progress begins to stall, you can switch to doing both exercises on 3 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
Beyond that, you can try this:
Day 1: Press
Day 2: Zercher Carry
Day 3: off
Day 4: Press
Day 5: Zercher Carry
Day 6: off
Day 7: off

For the Press*, you'll progress using Mark Wildman's volume cycles. Pick your starting resistance and:

1. Perform 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps each (same resistance and rep count for each round). Rest 1 minute between rounds.
2. Each session, do an additional 1-to-2 rounds (to a maximum of 20).
3. Once you perform 20 rounds in a single session, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the number of reps per round (to no more than 5) while keeping resistance the same, and return to step 1. If you've already been doing 5 reps per round, increase resistance by 5-to-10lbs and return to step 1.

(* In my programming, I mean the Strict Overhead Press by default. With that said however, if you prefer, here you can do the Push Press instead. The Thruster is yet another option.)

Try this progression protocol for the Zercher Carry^. Pick your starting resistance and:

1. Carry it for 100 feet, once.
2. Each session, do an additional 100ft carry (to a maximum of 5). Try resting ~1-to-2 minutes between rounds to start. Adjust as necessary, but keep track of all this in your training log.
3. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 100ft, perform a single round of 200ft.
4. Each session, do an additional 200ft carry (to a maximum of 5).
5. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 200ft, perform a single round of 300ft.
6. Each session, do an additional 300ft carry (to a maximum of 5).
7. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 300ft, add ~10-to-20lbs and return to step 1.

(^ To avoid always turning around to the same side at the halfway mark, alternate which side you turn to, from 1 session to the next. Keep track of this in your training notes.)

Waiter Walks and Zercher Squats

by Omar Cabaleiro 2025.Dec.31

I suggest you begin by training daily, alternating the 2 exercises named in the title, from 1 day to the next.
As progress begins to stall, you can switch to doing both exercises on 3 fixed days per week (i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday).
Beyond that, you can try this:
Day 1: Waiter Walk
Day 2: Zercher Squat
Day 3: off
Day 4: Waiter Walk
Day 5: Zercher Squat
Day 6: off
Day 7: off

For each round of the Waiter Walk, you'll switch hands once, at the halfway mark.*
You can train it with either a kettlebell or a dumbbell.
Try this progression protocol. Pick your starting resistance and:

1. Carry it for 100 feet, once.
2. Each session, do an additional 100ft carry (to a maximum of 5). Try resting ~1-to-2 minutes between rounds to start. Adjust as necessary, but keep track of all this in your training log.
3. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 100ft, perform a single round of 200ft.
4. Each session, do an additional 200ft carry (to a maximum of 5).
5. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 200ft, perform a single round of 300ft.
6. Each session, do an additional 300ft carry (to a maximum of 5).
7. The next session after performing 5 rounds of 300ft, add ~5-20lbs and return to step 1.

(* From 1 session to the next, alternate which side you carry the weight on first, and turn around to that side at the halfway mark. Keep track of this in your training notes, so you don't need to try to remember. This is to avoid always turning around to the same side.)

For the Zercher Squat, you can use a barbell or a sandbag.
You'll progress using Mark Wildman's volume cycles. Pick your starting resistance and:

1. Perform 1-to-4 rounds of 1-to-5 reps each (same resistance and rep count for each round). Rest 1 minute between rounds.
2. Each session, do an additional 1-to-2 rounds (to a maximum of 20).
3. Once you perform 20 rounds in a single session, if you've been doing fewer than 5 reps per round, increase the number of reps per round (to no more than 5) while keeping resistance the same, and return to step 1. If you've already been doing 5 reps per round, increase resistance by ~5-to-25lbs and return to step 1.